

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension or)	
)	
Revocation of the Educator Certificate of)	ORDER OF
)	
Rhodesa C. Smith,)	SUSPENSION
)	
Certificate 133245)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on August 9, 2006. On July 13, 2006, the South Carolina Department of Education (Department) sent Rhodesa C. Smith a notice of her right to a hearing before the State Board concerning the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate 133245 by regular and certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery. Ms. Smith received the notice letter as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing her signature. Ms. Smith did not request a hearing within the time frame specified in the letter. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to order the suspension of Ms. Smith's certificate for a three-year period.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Smith holds a valid S.C. educator certificate with over eighteen years of teaching experience. During the 2005-06 school year, Ms. Smith was employed as a chorus teacher at Fairfield Middle School in the Fairfield County School District. On March 3, 2006, the District placed Ms. Smith on administrative leave following allegations that she slapped a female student across the face. The District terminated Ms. Smith's employment on March 21, 2006.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

“The State Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004), S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58. Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004). The State Board finds that the information presented supports its determination that just cause exists to suspend Ms. Smith’s certificate for a period of three years, through August 8, 2009. If Ms. Smith wishes to have her certificate reinstated at the end of the suspension period, she must make a written request to the Department’s Office of Educator Certification.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: /S/ Joe Isaac
Joe Isaac, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 9, 2006